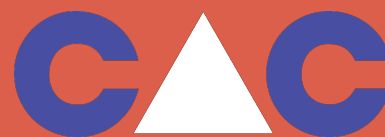


# Ngahenda Mashi

Chagga

Leadership Inauguration Ngoma



Cultural Arts Centre  
Tumaini University Makumira

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## Cultural Insights:

*In Tanzania, it is difficult to separate the idea of song, dance, and rhythm. This is why in Swahili the word **ngoma** means all three concepts combined.*

*In Chagga culture (and in many other cultures as well), any main societal event calls for special songs and dances. These are referred to as ceremonial **ngoma**, and there are many categories within. This song is an example of an inauguration song. During the installation of a new chief, the Chagga celebrate by drinking the local beer (*mbege*) and singing many songs.*

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## Musical Concepts:

**Call and Response:** In many musical traditions in Tanzania, the call and response format is widely used. The Chagga are no exception. Introduce this concept with different exercises such as speaking in turn, or telling a story with a common refrain sung/spoken by the listeners. Ask for examples of how call and response is used in everyday life through speech, listening, etc.

**Variations:** Another aspect of many Chagga songs is that the leading part is often varied depending on the singer and the mood. This is often done without much conscious thought, and when duplicating this effect, it should be done in a carefree, easy way. Practice this with a group by providing a simple melody with lyrics and asking individuals or small groups to come up with possible variations. Ask them to change one note, a few notes, the rhythm, the words, etc.

This concept is especially applicable in the horn (*pembe*) notation. Each measure may be taken as an individual variation, and the player is free to mix and match the order of the patterns, or even create new ones. Another option is to not play for a few measures or even a whole verse, and then come back in when the mood fits. The patterns notated are a few standard rhythms, and the horn in Chagga tradition plays two notes a perfect fifth apart.

**Keeping Rhythm with the Body:** In many Chagga traditional songs, a simple dance is performed along with the song. It involves the performers making a circle and walking on the beat while beating the drums. This utilizes the ankle bells (*njuga*) and helps keep everyone in the same rhythm and tempo. Practice by singing/listening to music and walking in a circle on the beat (crotchets), clapping hands on the same beat or beating hand drums. The drums (*mtingo*) are the authentic drums for the Chagga people, but low-pitched open drums may be used as a substitute.



# Ngahenda Mashi

Chagga Traditional  
Transcribed by Megan Stubbs

$\text{♩} = 85$

Call

Nga-hen-da ma-shie      Nga-hen-da i-we \_\_\_      Nga-le mo'-kuu \_\_\_      Nga-hen-da ma-shie

Response

Oo - cha      Oo - cha      Oo - cha      Ki-san-

Horn  
(*Pembe*)

Ankle Bells  
(*Njuga*) &  
Drum  
(*Miingo*)

Continue till end

4

Wa-na wam-ka nyi-men-ge      Ngo-ma ya mti-ngo men-ge

ge-nyi kya na - ru - mo, ndo - romengesam - ba-la-ham - ba ham-ba      ham - ba ham-ba      ham -

8

Wa - ra - ru nyi - wa - wi \_\_\_      U - ta - ma - du - ni      Nga - hen - da ma - shie \_\_\_

- ba ham - ba      ham - ba ham - ba      ham - ba ham - ba

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This song may be repeated as many times as desired.

The horn (*pembe*) part may be varied, the rhythms transcribed are a few common patterns. You may make new rhythms or use the ones provided interchangeably.

This transcription is based on a performance by the Mtingo Group on the 25th of February, 2016.

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Links:

[Video of Ngahenda Mashi](#)



Traditional Chagga group performing with drums (*mtingo*) and horn (*pembe*).



Another example of the drum (*mtingo*)

### Credits:

#### Video/Audio recording:

Aliko Mwakanjuki & Gabriel Olodi

#### Background research:

Gabriel Olodi & Mercy Kimaro

#### Transcriptions:

Megan Stubbs

#### Translations:

Megan Stubbs & Mercy Kimaro

#### Curriculum

#### design/formatting:

Megan Stubbs

## Translations (Poetic)

### Swahili:

Kiongozi: Nimesafiri Mbali (Wote: Nikarudi)

K: Nikaenda karibu (W: Nikarudi)

K: Ulipolemewa na safari

W: Ni kwenye soko la narumo, nikinunua magadi. Sema sema!

K: Wototo wameamka alfajiri (W: Sema sema!)

K: Mtingo ni umoja (W: Sema sema!)

K: Wakiwa wawili au watatu (W: Sema sema!)

K: Utamaduni (W: Sema sema!)

### English:

Call: I traveled far away (Response: I came back)

C: I went close by (R: I came back)

C: Where the journey became heavy

R: I was in the Narumo market, I bought mineral salts. Speak! Speak!

C: The children have awoken at dawn (R: Speak! Speak!)

C: The mtingo drum is unity (R: Speak! Speak!)

C: Where there are two or three (R: Speak! Speak!)

C: Tradition (R: Speak! Speak!)

## Pronunciation

The language of the Chagga (*Kichagga*) is pronounced phonetically, the same as Swahili or Latin. See guide below for English pronunciation:

**A** – Father

**E** – Egg

**I** – Bee

**O** – Door (not closed as in low)

**U** – Loop

**Y** – diphthong ‘y’ as in yield